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IRELAND — VINDICATION OF HIS CONDUCT

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Mr. IRELAND's Vindication of his Conduct,

RESPECTING

THE PUBLICATION

OF THE

Suppoſed Shakſpeare MSS.

BEING

A PREFACE OR INTRODUCTION

TO

A REPLY

TO THE CRITICAL LABORS OF

Mr. MALONE,

IN HIS

"ENQUIRY INTO THE AUTHENTICITY OF "CERTAIN PAPERS, &c. &c."

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY MR. FAULDER AND MR. ROBSON, NEW BOND STREET; MR. EGERTON, WHITEHALL; AND MESSRS. WHITE, FLEET STREET.

1796.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following ſheets originally formed a part of a work now in conſiderable forwardneſs, as a reply to Mr. Malone's critical labors on the ſubject of the Shakſpeare MSS. The body of this work required conſiderable reſearch, and, ſo large a portion of time for its completion, as to render ſome further delay unavoidable in the publication of the whole. But this part of the work having been completed and ready for the public eye, I have yielded to the importunities of my friends, who have ſuggeſted to me the neceſſity at this moment, of laying before the public ſuch further particulars as relate to my conduct therein. It will be obſerved that I have adverted in the courſe of the following pages to Mr. Malone: and if the animadverſions ſhould be deemed irrelevant, I truſt, that no other apology is neceſſary, than the intimation already given, of my having intended this Vindication as an introduction to the work alluded to, and therefore that it was a more eligible plan, not to make any deviation from the method, I at firſt determined upon purſuing.

A recent circumſtance, with which the Public is well acquainted, ſeems to call for this Vindication, and

even

even (painful as it is) to impoſe the meaſure upon me as a ſolemn duty, and obligation. I allude to the public ſtatement, made by my Son. The world to which he has appealed, will judge and pronounce upon the truth of the allegations, and the weight of the teſtimonies, which he has laid before them. I beg to aſſure the public that the refutation of Mr. Malone's book ſhall be brought forward with all poſſible ſpeed; in which, whether the papers imputed to Shakſpeare are genuine or not, it will be clearly ſhewn, that he embarked in this enquiry as utterly deſtitute of the information of a philologiſt, and the acumen of a Critic, as it will, by his groſs and repeated perſonalities, be manifeſted, that his ſelfiſh and intereſted views have made him throughout loſe ſight of the manners of a Gentleman.

ERRATA.

Page 12, laſt line but 1, after *my* read *friends*
12, line 10, after *to* add *the*
18, — 11, for *it* read *them*
27, — 13, before *Frank* read *John*
30, — 1, for *enter into* read *make*

A VIN-

A

VINDICATION, &c.

THE moſt unequivocal characteriſtic of an enlightened age, is the licence which is indulged to all, of free communication with the public on doubtful, and controverted ſubjects. There are, indeed, ſome queſtions, in the diſcuſſion of which it will be always difficult to perſuade the world, that mutual toleration is the moſt conducive to the intereſts of truth, and the moſt auxiliary to the operation of human reaſon.

But on topics of merely literary reference, that theſe enmities ſhould at all exiſt, muſt appear ſingular, and even paradoxical. For in literary conteſts there is ſcarcely any appeal to any

paſſion. They can neither provoke the hopes, nor vibrate on the fears of mankind, to any conſiderable degree. It muſt, therefore, be a ſatisfactory reflection to thoſe, who have remarked on the hiſtory of the human mind, that the mutual hoſtility, and bigotry, which once deformed the writings of critics and philologiſts, is at this moment, with few exceptions, totally extinguiſhed. Poſterity, when they read the works of Salmaſius, or Bentley, will be perplexed, even in finding motives for a ſpirit ſo intolerant, and a zeal ſo intractable on matters of ſuch light, and trivial import.

There are, however, exceptions to a remark, ſo honorable to the taſte, and liberality of our age. There are ſtill ſome remnants of that *exploded diſcipline*, which from the diſuſe into which it has fallen, muſt at this time, be highly diſguſting to the lovers of Engliſh literature. The arrogance of ſchoolmen without their learning, the rancour of controverſy without the wit by which it is embelliſhed, muſt at the preſent

period,

period, demand the ſevereſt, and moſt exemplary animadverſion.

Mr. Malone has acquired, it may be ſaid, ſome degree of literary reputation. It is that ſort of reputation, to which a laborious and patient frame of mind, in all the departments of literature has its peculiar pretenſions. But neither Mr. Malone, nor any other labourer of the ſame deſcription, has any privilege of over leaping the province, to the drudgery of which a limited capacity has deſtined him, while a patient, and charitable world does not deny him the ſmall pittance of fame, that ariſes out of it. *Illâ ſe jactet in aulâ.* Mr. Malone, of all writers, has the ſlighteſt pretenſions to that majeſterial character, he has lately aſſumed, and by virtue of which he undertakes not only to diſcuſs, but to decide on literary queſtions, as well as to aſperſe the moral reputations of thoſe, who differ from him in opinion.

The appeal, which I am now about to make

from the ſentence, which this gentleman has paſſed upon the papers in queſtion, primarily originates from that ſolicitude to vindicate my own character, which it muſt be naturally ſuppoſed, I cannot but feel on this occaſion. Whether the critical reaſonings of Mr. Malone are ſolid, or unfounded, whether he is entitled to any degree of reputation, as a philologiſt, or critic, by the publication of his enquiry, are queſtions of which the diſcuſſion will be poſtponed, till my anſwer appears before the public. At preſent I am merely claiming the attention of the reader to thoſe topics, which relate to my own perſonal agency in the tranſaction.

With regard to the manner in which my own character is attacked, it will unqueſtionably be expected that I ſhould ſpeak fully and amply. It is true Mr. Malone deals only in inſinuations; and inſinuations, malevolent and ſlanderous as they are, may eaſily be repelled. It is true alſo, that theſe inſinuations are conveyed in a manner, which neither reſembles the overbearing acute-

neſs

neſs of Dr. Bentley, nor the ſubtle poignancy of Biſhop Warburton. But inſinuations may be troubleſome, and even noxious; becauſe the dulleſt being alive may at length, by reiteration and importunity, in ſome meaſure, atone for the bluntneſs and impotence of the ſhafts with which he aſſails you. It may indeed be ſaid that theſe attacks are of a puny and ineffectual nature, but to remain indifferent to ſuch attacks, is a philoſophy which I have never arrogated; and it would look like a ſort of affected ſtoiciſm, to appear ſilent and unmoved, amidſt ſuch malicious and calumniating aſperſions.

Through the whole courſe of his pamphlet, Mr. Malone ſpeaks of the "Impoſtor," and the "Impoſture." I remember in Mr. Locke, a long chapter on words, and the intellectual aſſociations which belong to them. In a well-known eſſay on the ſublime and beautiful Mr. Locke's doctrine is oppoſed; and it is contended that words are independent of ideas. The author applied this doctrine only to works of taſte, but

particularly

particularly to poetry. But in the ſubject to which Mr. Malone has extended the theory nothing ſurely can be more ridiculous than the uſe of words without ideas; and until any thing of the ſublime and beautiful be diſcovered in the proſe of that gentleman, the good ſenſe and taſte of the world will condemn the uſe of words which are utterly deſtitute of a meaning; eſpecially when they are employed on a ſubject of reaſoning and demonſtration. Would not the conduct of that judge be ludicrous as well as indecent, who on a criminal matter, ſhould uſe the words traitor, murderer, or thief, in his addreſs to the jury, concerning the evidence before them? So in the controverſy upon the Shakeſpeare MSS it would have been better reaſoning, as well as more candid hoſtility, to have proved the impoſture before he proclaimed the impoſtor.

In reply to theſe charges againſt me, I ſhall lay before the public ſome ſtriking documents, which will conſtitute a moſt irrefragable ſyſtem of

of evidence in my favor, and furniſh the beſt refutation of what has been alledged againſt me. I ſhall firſt repeat that which I have told the world already, and then I ſhall enter into the ſtatements, which corroborate and fortify what I have hitherto aſſerted.

In the preface to my folio collection of *Shakſpeare* MSS I ſtated all the circumſtances relative to them, as minutely as my own knowledge of them and the delicacy of my ſituation permitted me. I ſhall now repeat the aſſertion, with no other addition than my ſolemn proteſtation of its truth.

" It may be expected, that ſomething ſhould " be ſaid by the editor, of the manner in which " theſe papers came into his hands. He recei- " ved them from his Son, Samuel William " Henry Ireland, a young man, then under " nineteen years of age, by whom the diſco- " very was accidentally made at the houſe of a " gentleman of conſiderable property."

" Amongſt

" Amongſt a maſs of family papers, the " contracts between Shakſpeare, Lowine and " Condell, and the leaſe granted by him and " Hemynge to Michael Fraſer, which was firſt " found, were diſcovered, and ſoon after the " deed of gift to William Henry Ireland (de- " ſcribed as the friend of Shakſpeare, in con- " ſequence of his having ſaved his life on the " river Thames, when in extreme danger of " being drowned) and alſo the deed of truſt to " John Hemynge were diſcovered. In purſu- " ing this ſearch, he was ſo fortunate as to diſ- " cover ſome deeds very material to the in- " tereſts of this gentleman, and ſuch as eſta- " bliſhed beyond all doubt, his title to a conſi- " derable property. In return for this ſervice, " added to the conſideration, that the young " man bore the ſame name, and arms, with " the perſon, who ſaved the life of Shakſpeare, " the gentleman promiſed him every thing re- " lative to the ſubject, that had been or ſhould " be found either in town or at his country " houſe. At this houſe the principal part of

" the

" the papers, with a great variety of books
" containing the MSS notes and three MSS
" plays, with part of another were disco-
" vered."

" Fortified as he is with the opinion of the
" unprejudiced and the intelligent, the editor
" will not allow that it can be presumption in
" him to say, that he has no doubt of the truth
" and authenticity of that which he lays before
" the public. Of this fact he is as fully satis-
" fied, as he is with the honor that has been
" observed to him upon this subject. So cir-
" cumstanced, he should not feel justified in im-
" portuning, or any way requesting a gentle-
" man, to whom he is known only by obliga-
" gation, to subject himself to the impertinence
" and licentiousness of literary curiosity and ca-
" vil, unless he should himself voluntarily come
" forward. But this is not all. It was not till
" after the mass of papers received, became vo-
" luminous, that Mr. Ireland had any idea of

 " printing

" printing them: he then applied for his per-
" miſſion ſo to do,* and this was not obtained,
" but under the ſtrongeſt injunction that his
" name ſhould not appear. This injunction
" has thro' all the ſtages of this buſineſs been
" uniformly declared: and, as this gentleman
" has dealt moſt liberally with the editor, he
" can confidently ſay, that in his turn he has
" with equal openneſs and candour conducted
" himſelf towards the public, to whom imme-
" diately upon every communication made,
" every thing has been ſubmitted without
" reſerve."

The information, which induced me to lay this ſtatement before the public, was derived from written declarations of my ſon, and from

* The reader is here requeſted to underſtand, that the application made to the ſuppoſed original poſſeſſor, was not perſonal, but by letters given by him to his ſon, to be conveyed by him, and by anſwers received, thro' the ſame channel.

thoſe

thoſe of his friend Mr. Talbot, of the Dublin Theatre. I now preſent to the world the account of the diſcovery, as it was written by my ſon, and which is at this time, in my poſſeſſion.

" *November* 10th, 1795.

" I was at chambers, when Talbot called " in, and ſhewed me a deed, ſigned Shakſpeare. " I was much aſtoniſhed, and mentioned the " pleaſure my father would receive, could he " but ſee it. Talbot then ſaid, I might ſhew " it. I did not for two days: and at the end " of that term he gave it me. I then preſſed " hard to know, where it was found. After " two or three days had elapſed, he introduced " me to the party. He was with me in the " room, but took little trouble in ſearching. " I found a ſecond deed, and a third, and two " or three looſe papers. We alſo diſcovered " a deed, which aſcertained to the party landed " property, of which he had then no knowledge. " In conſequence of having found this, he told

 " us,

" us, we might keep every deed, every ſcrap
" of paper relative to Shakſpeare. Little was
" diſcovered in town, but what was above men-
" tioned, but the reſt came from the country;
" owing to the papers having been removed from
" London, many years ago.

" S. W. H. Ireland."

Being naturally deſirous of obtaining the evidence of Mr. Talbot, to confirm what had been advanced by my ſon, I applied to the former, and received from him an anſwer, from which I have made the following extracts.

Carmarthen, November 25, 1795.

" Dear Sir,

" The gentleman, in whoſe poſſeſſion theſe
" things were found, was a friend of mine; and
" by me your Son Samuel was introduced to his
" acquaintance. One morning in rummaging
" from mere curioſity ſome old lumber, conſiſt-
" ing of deeds, books, &c. in a cloſet of my
" friend's houſe, I diſcovered a deed with the

" ſignature

" ſignature of William Shakſpeare, which in-
" duced me to read part of it, and on reading
" the words " Stratford on Avon" I was con-
" vinced it was the famous Engliſh Bard: with
" permiſſion of my friend (whom I will in future
" call Mr. H———) I carried the deed to Sa-
" muel, knowing with what enthuſiaſm, he and
" yourſelf regarded the works of that author,
" or any trifling article he was poſſeſſed of;
" though I was prepared to ſee my friend Sa-
" muel a little pleaſed with what I preſented to
" him, yet I did not expect that great joy he
" felt on the occaſion. He told me there was
" nothing known of the hand writing of Shak-
" ſpeare, but his ſignature to ſome deed or will
" in Doctors Commons, and preſſed me to carry
" him to H——'s houſe, that he might ſee,
" if there was amongſt the lumber I had ſpoken
" of, any other ſuch relique. I immediately
" complied with his requeſt. This was Samuel's
" firſt introduction. For ſeveral ſucceſſive
" mornings we paſſed ſome hours in examining
" different papers and deeds, moſt of which

" were

" were uſeleſs, and unintereſting. But our
" labor was rewarded by finding a few more
" relating to Shakſpeare. Theſe we took away,
" but never without H's permiſſion. At laſt
" we were ſo fortunate as to diſcover a deed,
" in which our friend was materially concerned.
" Some landed property, which had been long
" the ſubject of litigation was here aſcertained,
" and H's title to it clearly proved. H. now
" ſaid in return for this, whatever you and Mr.
" Ireland find among the lumber, be it what it
" may, ſhall be your own (meaning thoſe things
" which we ſhould prize for being Shakſpeare's)
" Mr. H. juſt before my departure from Lon-
" don, ſtrictly enjoined us never to mention him
" as the poſſeſſor of the papers. Tho' I wiſhed
" until Sam. ſhould have completed his re-
" ſearches, that little ſhould have been ſaid on
" the ſubject, yet I was ignorant, why H. when
" the ſearch was finiſhed, ſhould ſtill wiſh his
" name concealed. I thought it abſurd and
" could not prevail on him to mention his rea-
" ſons; tho' from ſome trifling unguarded ex-

" preſſion

" preſſion, I was at laſt induced to believe that
" one of his anceſtors was a cotemporary of
" Shakſpeare in the dramatic profeſſion; that
" as he H. was a man ſomewhat known in the
" world, and in the walk of high life, he did
" not wiſh ſuch a circumſtance ſhould be made
" public; this ſuſpicion was, as it will preſently
" appear, well founded. Whilſt I was in Dub-
" lin, I heard to my great joy and aſtoniſhment,
" that Sam had diſcovered the play of Vorti-
" gern and Rowena, the MS of Lear, &c.
" &c. I was impatient to hear every parti-
" cular, and principally for that purpoſe made
" my late viſit to London. I found H. what I
" always thought him, a Man of ſtrict honor,
" and willing to abide by the promiſe he made,
" in conſequence of our finding the deed, by
" which he benefitted ſo much. I will now ex-
" plain the reaſon of H's ſecrecy. On account
" of your deſire to give the world ſome explan-
" ation of the buſineſs, and your telling me,
" that ſuch explanation was neceſſary, I re-
" newed my entreaties to him, to ſuffer us to diſ-

" diſcover

" cover his name, place of abode, and every
" circumſtance of the diſcovery of the papers,
" but in vain. I proceeded to prove as well
" as I could the folly of its concealment, when
" he produced a deed of gift, which he himſelf
" had juſt found in the cloſet, juſt before my
" departure from London, in January laſt, but
" which I had never ſeen before. By this deed
" William Shakſpeare aſſigned to John ——
" who it ſeems was really an anceſtor of our friend
" H. every article contained in an upper room.
" The articles were, furniture, cups, a miniature
" picture, and many other things; but except-
" ing the miniature (which was lately found
" and which was a likeneſs of Shakſpeare him-
" ſelf), and the papers, very few of them re-
" main in H's hands, and the reſt very unfor-
" tunately cannot be traced. It is ſuppoſed too,
" that many valuable papers have been loſt, and
" are deſtroyed, as the whole lumber is never
" remembered to have been at all valued or
" guarded from the hands of the loweſt domeſ-
" tics. When I parted from you a few weeks

ſince

" ſince, H. promiſed me that the deed of " gift above mentioned ſhould be ſent you, " firſt eraſing and cutting out the name of the " grantee.* I hope, my dear Sir, I have omit- " ted nothing in relating theſe circumſtances, " and though this account may not enable you " perfectly to ſatisfy many, who from an idle " curioſity would know more, yet the liberal- " minded, I am ſure will allow that you have " juſt reaſons for with-holding what is, and is to " be concealed. I moſt earneſtly beg you will " ſend me a copy of Vortigern and Rowena, as " ſoon as it can conveniently be written, with the " margin marked, according to the curtailment " for Stage repreſentation.

" M. Talbot.

" S. Ireland, Eſq."

* Within a few days after the receipt of the above, the deed of truſt alluded to, was brought to me by my Son, without any eraſure, as mentioned in the above letter, and was the deed of truſt to John Hemynge, inſerted in the folio volume of the Shakſpeare papers.

Upon this authority and with this degree of teſtimony, I proceeded to the publication of the papers. Yet it may by ſome be objected, that the weight of the whole evidence collectively taken, is ſtill weak and imperfect, on account of the concealment of the name of the gentleman alluded to. But what inference does this objection authoriſe? It was ſuch as entirely to militate againſt any ſuſpicion of fraud in my breaſt. For had the papers been forged, I could not imagine that the fabricators of it would have left that part of its evidence, to which by ordinary minds, and according to ordinary rules of judgment, the greateſt weight is uſually attributed, ſo palpably mutilated, and defective. I could not imagine that it could have been the work of one impoſtor, when I conſidered the infinite variety of the papers, and the length of time which muſt have been conſumed on ſo elaborate a fiction. For it muſt have been very extraordinary, that of all thoſe who were concerned in the impoſture, not one ſhould have

ſuggeſted

ſuggeſted the neceſſity of forging completer teſtimonies, reſpecting the place, and perſon, in whoſe poſſeſſion they were found.

Beſides theſe reaſons, coming as they did through the channel of my Son, I could not ſuſpect their authenticity; and every thing I had remarked of Mr. Talbot during my acquaintance with him, placed him in my judgment beyond even the poſſibility of ſuſpicion, his fairneſs and honeſty in the tranſaction appeared invariable. A father is not very eager to entertain ſurmiſes, that affect the moral credit of one ſo dearly connected with him as his only ſon, and when the ſame declarations were made by him in the moſt ſolemn and awful manner, before crouds of the moſt eminent characters, who came to my houſe, I could not ſuffer myſelf to cheriſh the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of his veracity.

The teſtimonies here adduced it were difficult to reſiſt. But theſe were not all by which my conduct was governed in this tranſaction.

I invited to my houſe all who wiſhed to gratify their curioſity, by an inſpection of the papers. Of theſe, the greater part conſiſting of the moſt celebrated literary characters this age has produced, expreſſed their opinions, not in the phraſe of mere aſſent, but in the unequivocal language of a full and overflowing conviction. Some were even deſirous of ſubſcribing without ſolicitation, their names to a certificate, in which their belief might be formally and permanently recorded. The firſt of this reſpectable liſt was the rev. Dr. Parr. I informed this gentleman, that the late James Boſwell, Eſq. had requeſted my permiſſion to annex his name to a certificate, vouching for the validity of the papers and which he drew up for that purpoſe. When I ſhewed the Doctor, at his requeſt what Mr. Boſwell had written the day before, he exclaimed with his characteriſtic energy and manner, that it was too feebly expreſſed for the importance of the ſubject; and begged that he might himſelf dictate to me the following form of a certificate, to which he immediately ſubſcribed his own name,

and

and which afterwards received the ſignatures of the other reſpectable characters, that are annexed to it.

" We whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed " have, in the preſence and by the favor of " Mr. Ireland, inſpected the Shakſpeare papers, " and are convinced of their authenticity."

Samuel Parr.
John Tweddell.
Thomas Burgeſs.
John Byng.
James Bindley.
Herbert Croft.
Somerſet.
If. Heard, Garter King of Arms.
F. Webb.
R. Valpy.
James Boſwell.*

* Mr. Boſwell, previous to ſigning his name, fell upon his knees, and in a tone of enthuſiaſm, and exultation, thanked God, that he had lived to witneſs this diſcovery, and exclaimed that he could now die in peace.

Lauderdale.

Lauderdale.
Rev. J. Scott.
Kinnaird.
John Pinkerton.
Thomas Hunt.
Henry James Pye.
Rev. N. Thornbury.
Jon^n. Hewlett, Tranſlator of old Records,
Common Pleas Office, Temple.
Mat. Wyatt.
John Frank Newton.

The following is a catalogue of the papers above alluded to, dated

February 25th, 1795.

1. Viz. Shakſpeare's profeſſion of faith on two ſmall ſheets of paper.

2. His copy of a letter to Lord Southampton, and Lord Southampton's anſwer.

3. His letter to Richard Cowley, incloſing a curious drawing in pen and ink of himſelf.

4. His

4. His letter to Anna Hatherwaye, the lady whom he afterwards married, incloſing a braided lock of his hair.

5. Five poetical ſtanzas, addreſſed to the ſame lady, in his own hand writing.

6. His note of hand, payable one month after date to John Hemynge, for five pounds, and five ſhillings, together with John Hemynge's receipt the day it became due.

7. A leaſe of ſix acres of land, and two houſes abutting on the Globe Theatre, granted by William Shakſpeare to Michael Fraſer, and ſigned and ſealed by the reſpective parties.

8. Deed of agreement between William Shakſpeare and Henry Condell for the weekly payment of a certain ſum therein ſpecified for the theatrical ſervices of the ſaid Henry Condell, ſigned and ſealed by the reſpective parties.

9. Deed

9. Deed of agreement between William Shakſpeare and John Lowine for the weekly payment of a certain ſum therein ſpecified for the theatrical ſervices of the ſaid John Lowine, ſigned and ſealed by the reſpective parties.

10. A ſmall whole length of a tinted drawing, ſuppoſed to be of Shakſpeare in the character of Baſſanio, and on the reverſe ſide the whole length of a perſon in the character of Shylock, in its original black frame.

11. An original letter of Queen Elizabeth to Shakſpeare, authenticated by himſelf.

In *March* 1796, In conſequence of Mr. Albany Wallis having recently made a diſcovery of ſome deeds relative to Shakeſpeare and Ireland, the following Certificate was ſigned by the gentlemen, whoſe names are annexed to it, after having carefully peruſed and collated the ſaid deeds with thoſe in my poſſeſſion.

" *London,*

" *London, March,* 1796.

" We the underſigned, having inſpected the " following deeds in the poſſeſſion of Albany " Wallis, Eſq. of Norfolk Street, viz.

" A conveyance, dated 10th *March,* 1612, " ſaid to be from Henry Walker to William " Shakſpeare, William Johnſon, John Jackſon, " and John Hemynges, of a houſe in Black- " friars, then or late being in the occupation of " one William Ireland; ſigned Wm. Shak- " ſpeare, Jo. Jackſon, and Wm. Johnſon.

" And a deed dated 10th *February,* 1617, " being a conveyance ſigned Jo. Jackſon, Wm. " Johnſon, and John Hemynges of the ſame " premiſes;

" Having alſo inſpected the following papers " of Mr. Samuel Ireland of Norfolk Street, " viz.

" A MS. Play of Lear, a fragment of " Hamlet, a play of Vortigern—ſeveral deeds, " witneſſed Wm. Shakſpeare—ſeveral receipts " and notes of diſburſements of monies on ac- " count of the Globe and certain Theatres— " familiar letters ſigned Wm. Shakſpeare, and " other miſcellaneous MSS.

" And having compared the hand writing of " the above papers in Mr. Ireland's poſſeſſion, " with the ſignatures of Shakſpeare and He- " mynge to the deed in Mr. Wallis's hands, as " well as with the publiſhed Fac-ſimiles of the " autographs of Shakſpeare to his laſt will and " teſtament, and to a deed dated 11 *March*, 10 " Jac. I. which came to the hands of Mr. Wal- " lis, about the year 1760, among the title deeds " of the Rev. Mr. Fetherſtonehaugh, and from " the character and manner thereof, we declare " our firm belief in the authenticity of the auto- " graphs of Shakſpeare, and Hemynge, in the " hands of Mr. Ireland.

Iſaac

Iſaac Heard, Gr. K. at Arms.
Francis Webb.
Albany Wallis.
Richard Troward.
Jon^a. Hewlett, Tranſlator of old Records,
Common Pleas Office, Temple.
John Byng.
Francis Townſend, Windſor Herald.
Gilbert Franklin, Wimpole Street.
Matthew Wyatt, New Inn.
Richard Valpy, Reading.
Joſeph Skinner.
Frank Newton, Wimpole Street.

It may perhaps be almoſt unneceſſary to ſtate that I might have obtained innumerable ſignatures to each of the certificates, I have laid before the public, had I reſorted to any ſolicitations for the purpoſe. The very reſpectable liſt of ſubſcribers to the publication of Shakſpeare's MSS may be adverted to, as a corroborating proof in favor of their validity and in juſtification of my ſending them into the world.

I ſhall now preſent to the reader a voluntary depoſition formally drawn on ſtamped paper, and intended to be taken before a magiſtrate by my ſon.

" Samuel William Henry Ireland, of Nor-
" folk Street, in the pariſh of St. Clement
" Danes, in the county of Middleſex, Gent.
" maketh voluntary oath that ſince the 16th day
" of Dec. 1794, he this deponent hath at various
" times depoſited in the houſe of this deponent's
" Father, Samuel Ireland, of Norfolk Street
" aforeſaid, ſeveral deeds and MSS papers
" ſigned and ſuppoſed to be written by Wm.
" Shakſpear and others. And this deponent
" farther maketh oath and ſaith that the deeds
" and MSS papers now open for inſpection,
" at his this deponent's father's houſe, are the
" ſame which he this deponent ſo depoſited as
" aforeſaid; and whereas ſeveral diſputes have
" ariſen concerning the originality of the deeds
" and MS papers aforeſaid, and whereas Ed-
" mond Malone, of Queen Anne Street Eaſt, of
" the

" the parish of St. Mary-le-Bone, in the said " county of Middlesex, hath publickly adver- " vertised or caused to be advertised an assertion " to the effect that he, the said Edmond Ma- " lone, had discovered the above mentioned " papers and MS deeds to be a forgery, which " assertion may tend to injure the reputation of " his the said deponent's father. Now this de- " ponent farther maketh oath that he this de- " ponent's father, the said Samuel Ireland, hath " not, nor hath any one of the said Samuel Ire- " land's family, other than save and except this " deponent, any knowledge of the manner in " which he the said deponent, became possessed " of the said deeds or MSS papers aforesaid or " any part thereof, or of any circumstance, or " circumstances relating thereto.

" S. W. H. Ireland.

" Sworn before me this day of March, " 1796."

Copied verbatim from the hand writing of my Son.

It

It being thought unneceſſary to enter into a formal depoſition upon the ſubject, my ſon was not ſworn to what he has here depoſed. But Mr. Albany Wallis in May following drew up the advertiſement which I have here ſubjoined, conceiving it more adequate to the purpoſe, which was inſerted in the True Briton, Morning Herald, and other papers.

" Shakſpeare MSS.

" In juſtice to my father, and to remove " the reproach, under which he has innocently " fallen, reſpecting the papers publiſhed by him " as the MSS of Shakſpeare, I do hereby " ſolemnly declare that they were given to him " by me, as the genuine productions of Shakſ- " peare, and that he was and is at this moment " totally unacquainted with the ſource from " whence they came, or with any circumſtance " concerning them, ſave what he was told by " myſelf, and which he has declared in the " preface to his publication. With this firm

" belief

" belief and conviction of their authenticity,
" founded on the credit he gave to me and my
" aſſurances, they were laid before the world.
" This will be further confirmed, when at ſome
" future period it may be judged expedient to
" diſcloſe the means by which they were ob-
" tained.

" S. W. H. Ireland, Jun."

Witneſs,
Albany Wallis.
Thomas Trowſdale, Clerk to Meſſrs.
Wallis and Troward.

Norfolk Street, May 24, 1796.

This is ſurely very ample teſtimony, which my ſon has adduced, to eſtabliſh my innocence of the imputed forgery. I corroborate this teſtimony by ſome further quotations from ſeveral letters, written by Mr. M. Talbot, already mentioned to myſelf and my family, of which the originals are preſerved in my poſſeſſion.

Dublin,

Dublin, 15th *April*, 1796.

" So much do I lament the unfortunate " predicament in which Mr. Ireland is involv- " ed, that I muſt do every thing in my power " to extricate him from it, conſiſtent with my " own honour, and oath. The offer I ſhall " make, therefore will, I hope, be accepted " definitively without urging any more propoſals, " ſince any others muſt of neceſſity be declined " by me, though my life were the forfeit for " being ſecret. I will make an affidavit jointly " with Sam. " *That Mr. Ireland is innocent of any* " *forgery imputed to him; that he is equally as unac-* " *quainted with the diſcovery of the papers, as the* " *world in general; that he has been only the pub-* " *liſher of them: aud that the ſecret is known to* " *no more than Sam. myſelf, and a third perſon,* " *whom Mr. Ireland is not acquainted with.*"

" If

" If our making this affidavit and the pub-
" lication of it will ſerve Mr. Ireland, Sam
" and myſelf are both ready to ſtand forward."

" If I may venture an opinion, I ſtill think
" it probable that the papers are genuine, that
" Vortigern may have been one of Shakſpeare's
" firſt eſſays at dramatic writing."

" The play of Henry 2d I never have ſeen,
" nor the manuſcript of Vortigern, nor any
" thing relative to it, till I was in London, long
" after the latter was in Mr. Sheridan's hands.
" I muſt therefore depend on the veracity of
" others, as to their coming from the ſame
" ſource as the few manuſcripts I ſaw before I
" left London the firſt time."

" Mr. Ireland has deſired my opinion re-
" ſpecting a plan he propoſes of making two
" gentlemen of reſpectability acquainted with
" every circumſtance, who are to vouch to the
" world for the authenticity of the MSS.

" This will not be conſiſtent with our promiſe
" and oath."

" M. Talbot."

It is worth remarking, that about a week before the receipt of this letter (and ſtrange as it may appear, at the particular requeſt of my ſon) a committee conſiſting of twenty-four reſpectable gentlemen met at my houſe, for the purpoſe of taking into conſideration every circumſtance relative to the MSS and the obloquy under which I laboured, in conſequence of their publication. This committee met at three different times within the month of April, and my ſon was preſent at each of their meetings; at which he propoſed that two reſpectable perſons who were not members of the committee, ſhould be appointed to receive the following information.

" The gentlemen are to be informed
" whence the papers came, the name of the
" gentleman, to whom they belonged, by whom
" diſcovered,

" diſcovered, and in what place, and manner.
" The ſchedule of thoſe that remain behind is
" in my father's poſſeſſion, which he may ſhew,
" and which ſhall be accounted for by me."

" S. W. H. Ireland."

Copied verbatim from the above paper in his own hand writing, and in his preſence read to the Committee.

It muſt be obvious that this propoſal does not concur with Mr. Talbot's opinion, as quoted from his letter above.

The following ſchedule, likewiſe, was preſented to the committee by my ſon, accompanied with a ſolemn proteſtation, that every article marked with * he had ſeen, and would in a ſhort time be put into my hands: that thoſe, which

had not this mark, he had only heard were in exiſtence, but that he had not ſeen them.*

* Play of Richard II. in Shakſpeare's MS.
* Play of Henry II.
* —— of Henry V.
* 62 leaves of K. John.
* 49 leaves of Othello.
* 37 leaves of Richard III.
* 37 leaves of Timon of Athens.
* 14 leaves of Henry IV.
* 7 leaves of Julius Cæſar.
* Catalogue of his books in his own MS.
* Deed by which he became partner of the Curtain Theatre, with Benjamin Kele, and John Hemynges.
* Two drawings of the Globe Theatre on parchment.
* Verſes to Q. Elizabeth.

* This ſchedule was voluntarily written by my ſon, on the 10th Jan. 1796, in the preſence of Geo. Chalmers, and J. Reeves, Eſqrs.

* Verſes to Sir Francis Drake.
* Do. to Sir Walter Raleigh.
* Miniature of Shakſpeare ſet in ſilver,
Chaucer with his MS notes
Book relative to Q. Elizabeth do.
Euphues with do.
Bible with do.
Bochas's Works with his MS notes.
Barclay's Ship of Fools do.
Hollinſhed's Chronicle do.
Brief account of his life in his own hand.
Whole length portrait, ſaid to be of him in oil.

The committees alluded to, met three times without arriving at any ſatisfactory determinations; and as we found it difficult to ſelect two perſons to receive the information, my ſon had promiſed, Mr. Albany Wallis, as a profeſſional man, voluntarily offered to be himſelf the depoſitary of the ſecret. This truſt, as he ſays, he was induced to accept, in order to clear up any doubt in the mind of the ſuppoſed Gentleman as to

any

any part of his property that might be endangered by ſuch diſcloſure. In conſequence of this, my ſon had frequent interviews with Mr. Wallis. But what was communicated, at thoſe conferences, I have not learned from that gentleman, notwithſtanding my reiterated importunities, and moſt anxious ſolicitations for that purpoſe. His uniform anſwer to theſe ſolicitations was, " Do not aſk me any queſtions. It is not pro- " per that you ſhould know the ſecret. Keep " your mind eaſy; all will be well in time."

In ſupport of theſe teſtimonies, by which my innocence muſt be clearly eſtabliſhed in the judgments of all, who have the ſlighteſt pretenſions to candor, or ſound ſenſe, I will make another quotation from a letter I received from Mr. Talbot, dated Cork, Sept. 16th, 1796.

" Dear Sir,

" Your laſt letter to me ſhould have been " anſwered ſooner, and the promiſed affidavit

" been

" been ſent, if I could have obtained an anſwer " from your Son to ſomething I wrote about " ſome time ſince. For without his conſenting, " if not joining in ſuch a proceeding, I did " not think myſelf authoriſed, in taking any " ſtep whatever."

" I will do all I can to extricate you from " any difficulties you may labour under, and " not having heard any thing from your ſon, " I will make an affidavit ſolely, That from " my intimacy with him, and my own know- " ledge of the myſtery of the MSS you were " innocent of any deſign to miſlead or deceive " the public."

" I beg leave to aſſure you, that I ſhall feel " the greateſt pleaſure in ſtanding forward to " ſcreen you, who are an innocent ſufferer."

" M. Talbot."

I have now exhibited to the world all the teſtimonies of which I am in poſſeſſion, relative

to

to the diſcovery of theſe papers. Whatever impreſſion they are likely to produce, with regard to their authenticity, or ſpuriouſneſs, they who can doubt my innocence in the tranſactions, after this ſtatement muſt be hardened with an incurable malice, or an impenetrable incredulity. Yet for nearly two years, I have been expoſed to the animadverſions of every half-formed, and puny critic, who has been ſo far initiated in the elements of language, as to compoſe a malicious paragraph, and imbibed ſo much of the ſpirit of his fraternity, as to miſtake petulance and ſlander for reaſon and inveſtigation.

Beſides theſe evils, I have reaſon to complain of the low tricks, and artifices, that have been reſorted to, in order to excite the public prejudice againſt the MSS. I allude to the ſteps that were taken to preclude the Play of Vortigern from an equitable, and candid hearing. In ſupport of this aſſertion, let me refer the reader to the following advertiſement, publiſhed

liſhed by Mr. Malone, nearly three months before his enquiry made its appearance.

" Spurious Shakſpeare MSS.

" Mr. Malone's detection of this forgery " has been unavoidably delayed by the engrav- " ings having taken more time than was ex- " pected; but it is hoped that it will be ready " by the end of this month.

" *Feb.* 16, 1796."

With regard to the delay, which the author of the advertiſement ſeems to lament, I am compelled from my own knowledge of engraving, to conclude that it was wholly intentional. I know, and I ſpeak with confidence on the ſubject, that with very little diligence the engravings, which Mr. Malone has incorrectly copied from my publication, would require a very ſmall portion of time, for their completion. On the 25th of March, however, the play having been already advertiſed for the 2d of April, we find the critic, and his fellow labourers the engravers in ſuch a ſtate of forwardneſs that the

publication was advertiſed for Thurſday March 31ſt, only two days before the intended repreſentation of the piece. That it might be abſolutely impoſſible that the miſchief ſhould not take effect, in ſeveral papers of the 1ſt of April, particularly the Oracle, and Morning Herald, two different and elaborate critiques in praiſe of Mr. Malone's enquiry made their appearance.

No man can entertain a doubt concerning the purpoſes, this well conſtructed delay was meant to anſwer. The play was ready for repreſentation. It was to make its appeal to the general judgment; and to ſtand or fall by its deciſion. But it was the ſcheme of this critic, to intercept this appeal; to choak, and obſtruct the avenues to the public underſtanding, and to overwhelm it with a torrent of ill-founded prejudices, and anticipated convictions.

I cannot paſs over this part of the ſubject, without remarking, that in order to counteract as much as poſſible, the miſchief of theſe artifices,

fices, I inſerted three days afterwards an adver-tiſement in the papers, in which I animadverted in very ſevere terms on the temerity of charac-teriſing his work, as a detection. In reply to this, Mr. Malone inſerts a letter in the Gentle-man's Magazine, in which he vindicates him-ſelf from the charge, in the following words. "With reſpect to the literary temerity aſcribed "to him (Mr. Malone) in characteriſing his "work as a detection, he has no apprehenſion, "that he ſhall incur any cenſure from the judi-"cious part of mankind, ſince in this point of "view he only benches by the ſide of his learned "friend the preſent very reſpectable Lord Bi-"ſhop of Saliſbury, who 46 years ago publiſhed "a deſervedly admired tract, on a ſimilar ſub-"ject, thus intitled, Milton no Plagiary, or a "Detection of the forgeries contained in Lau-"der's Eſſay, on the imitation of the moderns "in the Paradiſe Loſt by Milton. By the rev. "John Douglas, &c."

I have made this quotation, that the world

may remark the indecent effrontery of drawing an analogy between the rev. Biſhop, and the author of the enquiry. Not to mention the wide and unmeaſurable diſtance, between the literary endowments of the two writers, it muſt be palpable to every one, that there is no reſemblance at all between the circumſtances of Lauder's forgery, and the diſcovery of the MSS in my poſſeſſion.

It is now time for me to cloſe this part of the ſubject. I have ſhewn that the manner in which the artifices, of which I complain, have been conducted, is of ſo mean and puſillanimous a nature, that the malice has been of ſo low and ſo contemptible a ſpecies, as to reflect very ſerious diſhonour on him, who has condeſcended to make uſe of it, becauſe it may naturally be imagined, that a perſon calling himſelf a ſcholar and a gentleman, might have had recourſe to worthier and more dignified weapons of controverſy.

The other part of this work will be allotted to

to an inveſtigation of the critical attacks, that have been directed againſt the papers, in which I truſt that Mr. Malone will be completely refuted. Perhaps it might be expected of me, that I ſhould advert to the other antagoniſts, who have appeared in the field of the controverſy. Of the firſt of theſe publications, entitled " A Letter to George Steevens, Eſq. con- " taining a Critical examination, &c. &c," As it has been abundantly refuted in a very able pamphlet, entitled " A Comparative Review of " the opinion, &c. &c." I ſhall ſay nothing further. One Waldron likewiſe, has waded into the controverſy, a bad actor and a worſe critic. Theſe are men, on whom I ſhall not animadvert. They who miſtake their vanity for their capacity, and ſuppoſe that they are qualified to perform what they have preſumption to attempt, are a tribe, on whom admonition will be waſted, and rebuke will be ſuperfluous.

But I have confined my reaſoning to Mr. Malone; becauſe, as he is known to the world by

by what may be emphatically called his literary *labours* on other occaſions, ſo has he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the bulk of his criticiſms on this. What Dr. Warburton ſaid of poor Theobald, he would have ſaid with infinitely more juſtice of this critic: "That what he read he could "tranſcribe; but as what he thought, if "ever he did think, he could but ill expreſs, "ſo he read on; and by that means got a cha-"racter of learning, without riſquing the im-"putation of wanting a better talent." In the part, however, which he has taken in this controverſy, he has brought the only literary quality he has, that of patient, and laborious reſearch, into ſuſpicion. Whether it be the inſtinctive property of dulneſs to be dark, and bewildered, in proportion to the efforts it makes to be bright and perſpicuous, or that though he has much reading, he has not enough for the office he has arrogated, it is certain that his book abounds with ſo many blunders, and overflows with ſo much preſumption, that it ſeems a ſort of mixed animal, engendered between

tween a perſevering dulneſs on one ſide, and an envious mind on the other.

If I ſucceed in proving what I have aſſerted, I ſhall do a very eſſential ſervice to literature itſelf. I ſhall have ridded the literary world of a ſort of uſurper. I ſhall have pulled from his dictatorſhip a man, who has aſpired with the moſt preſumptuous arrogance to a kind of oracular dignity on theſe matters. I ſhall have reſcued the underſtandings of the public from the dominion of a critic, who, relying on the bulk of his labours, and the ponderous maſs of his reſearches, has attempted to give laws on all topics of literature and criticiſm.

But ſhould I not effect this purpoſe, I ſhall at leaſt retire from the public tribunal with the ſoothing conſciouſneſs, of having vindicated my own character. For I truſt I have laid before the world, a maſs of documents, which will effectually lift me above the ſtroke of the venomous aſperſions that have been directed ſo perſeveringly againſt me. Should the language I

have

have occaſionally uſed in theſe attacks, appear harſh and irritable, I beg to obſerve in my juſtification, that Mr. Malone's ſtrictures are uniformly clothed in the language of aſperity and perſonal ſarcaſm; and ſurely ſome indulgence ought to be allowed me, if I repel his attacks with the ſame weapons, and reply to unjuſt inſinuations in the diction of indignant and wounded feelings. It was for the purpoſe principally of vindicating myſelf that I have ventured to make this appeal to the public. I might indeed complain of other misfortunes. I might advert to the pecuniary loſſes and the conſumption of time, which theſe tranſactions have led me into. But when the moſt valuable of all human benefits, a clear and unſullied character is endangered, I could not but look on every other evil, as of trivial and ſubordinate conſideration.

Norfolk Street,
November, 1796.

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